

# COVID-19 Vaccination, Primary Series

February 2023



**The vaccine is provided at no cost to you.** The federal government will cover the cost of your vaccine. You should not be charged or billed. Your provider should also not charge you for an office visit if you go in only to get the vaccine.



**There are multiple COVID-19 vaccines available. COVID-19 vaccines will require both an initial primary series and booster doses.** For the primary series, the second dose should be from the same manufacturer as the first dose and should be given at the same vaccination site as your first dose whenever possible. Available vaccines include Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson and Johnson (J&J/Janssen) and Novavax. Adults ages 18 and older choosing the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or Novavax vaccine, will receive two doses given three to four weeks apart. The Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen vaccine is given as a single dose. Children who are administered the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine will receive two doses three to eight weeks apart. Children who are administered the Moderna vaccine will receive two doses four weeks to eight weeks apart. Youth ages 12 to 17 years old who are administered the Novavax vaccine will receive two doses three to eight weeks apart. People over the age of six months should also receive a bivalent booster at least two months after they have completed their primary series or last booster. Your vaccine provider can assist you in determining which vaccination options are available and are right for you. For more information about the COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, see these [FAQs](#) from the Maine CDC.



**All of the available vaccines are safe and very effective.** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the vaccines for emergency use and found them all to be highly effective and safe with no serious safety concerns. Independent experts agree the vaccines are safe and effective.



**Find a vaccination site near you.** Visit: [www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines](https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines).

**You may feel side effects.** Like other routine vaccines, you may have a sore arm, fever, headaches, or fatigue after you are vaccinated. These are signs that the vaccine is working.

**What vaccines are currently available?**

There are four vaccines currently available: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen, and Novavax. Other vaccines may be available soon.

**Who should get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent getting COVID-19. It is your choice to get the vaccine. If you decide to get it, you should tell your vaccine provider if you:

- Have a history of severe allergic reactions
- Have a fever
- Have a bleeding disorder or take blood thinners
- Are immunocompromised or are on a medicine that affects your immune system
- Are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are lactating
- Have received another COVID-19 vaccine

You should not get the vaccine if you have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of the COVID-19 vaccine or to any ingredient in the vaccine.

You must be at least six months old to get the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, 12 years and older to get the Novavax vaccine, and 18 years old to get the Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen vaccine.

**What is in the COVID-19 vaccine?**

There are three types of COVID-19 vaccines. mRNA vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna teach our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. The immune response, which produces antibodies, is what helps us from getting sick in the future. Protein subunit vaccines, like Novavax, contain pieces (proteins) of the virus that causes COVID-19, also known as spike protein. The vaccine also contains another ingredient, called an adjuvant, that helps the immune system respond to that spike protein in the future so it will be able to act quickly when exposed to the actual virus. Viral Vector vaccines like Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen use a modified version of a different virus known as a vector virus to deliver important instructions to our cells. You may find more information on these different types of vaccines and how they work by going to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/how-they-work.html>. You cannot get COVID from getting the vaccine.

**Is permission from a parent or guardian required for youth under age 18?**

Parents or guardians can give permission in two ways: either by phone with a witness listening on the phone line, as arranged by the vaccination site, or by written consent on paper or electronically. Each vaccination site has their own consent form. Follow the instructions for submitting the form provided by the vaccination site.

Some individuals under age 18 may give their own consent for vaccination. For more information, please visit: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/public-faq>

It is recommended, but not required, that a parent or guardian be present during vaccination. For youth where DHHS is the legal guardian, the youth must be accompanied by a caseworker or resource parent, except at school-based vaccination clinics, where it is recommended, but not required, for a resource parent or caseworker to be present. If possible, youth should bring a form of identification to their appointment. If no documentation is available, parents or guardians can attest to the youth's eligibility to receive the vaccine.

**What happens after I get vaccinated?**

You will need to wait 15 to 30 minutes before leaving the vaccine site so your vaccine provider can help you if you do have an allergic reaction or other side effects. While you wait, you can sign up for v-safe to report any side effects and get a reminder for your second dose: [vsafe.cdc.gov](https://vsafe.cdc.gov).

It is common to have side effects one to three days after getting the vaccine. Common side effects are tiredness, muscle pain, pain in the arm where you got your shot, fever, headache, joint pain, chills, nausea, or vomiting. If your symptoms don't go away within three to four days, contact your doctor or clinic. You or your vaccine provider can also report side effects to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS): [vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html](https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html).

**Call 911 if you have an allergic reaction after leaving the clinic.** Signs of an allergic reaction may include difficulty breathing, swelling of your face and throat, fast heartbeat, a bad rash all over your body, dizziness, and weakness.

**If you get either the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or Novavax vaccine, be sure to make an appointment for your second dose.** You'll need to come back in three to eight weeks to get your second dose to complete your primary series. Two months after your primary series is complete, people over the age of six months will need an updated bivalent booster shot to be considered up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

See the following webpages for more information:

- [www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines](https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV>